Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A suture securing apparatus comprising:

an apparatus body having an upper surface, a lower surface, a first internal surface, a second internal surface, an outer surface, and at least one aperture,

the aperture having a longitudinal axis extending from the upper surface to the lower surface, a latitudinal axis extending from the first internal surface to the second internal surface, and defining an aperture surface, wherein a first longitudinal direction and a second longitudinal direction thereof each extends along the longitudinal axis in opposite directions, and a first latitudinal direction and a second latitudinal direction thereof each extends along latitudinal axis in opposite directions, the aperture including an integral locking means for engaging, and disengaging from, a suture threaded therethrough,

the locking means formed so as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the aperture and to oppose the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture until pressure is applied to the suture in the second latitudinal direction, thereby disengaging the locking means and permitting the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture.



2. (Amended)The suture securing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the locking means comprises [a] at least one ridge formed on at least a portion of the aperture surface for engaging, and disengaging from, the suture threaded therethrough, each ridge so formed as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the aperture and oppose the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture until pressure is applied to the suture in the second latitudinal

direction, thereby disengaging the locking means and permitting the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture.

3. (Amended)The suture securing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the locking means comprises a plurality of ridges formed on at least a portion of the aperture surface for engaging, and disengaging from, the suture threaded therethrough, each ridge so formed as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the aperture and oppose the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture until pressure is applied to the suture in the second latitudinal direction, thereby disengaging the locking means and permitting the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture.

9. (Amended). The suture securing apparatus according to claim 2, the apparatus body comprising a first aperture and a second aperture, wherein each ridge formed on the first aperture surface is so formed as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the first aperture and oppose the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the first aperture until pressure is applied to the suture in the second latitudinal direction, thereby disengaging the locking means and permitting movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the aperture, and wherein each ridge formed on the second aperture surface is so formed as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the second aperture and oppose the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the second aperture until pressure is applied to the suture in the second latitudinal direction, thereby disengaging the locking means and permitting the movement of the suture in the second longitudinal direction along the second aperture, wherein the first longitudinal direction along the first aperture and the first longitudinal direction along the second aperture are directed to the upper surface of the apparatus body.

11. (Amended). The suture securing apparatus according to claim 2, the apparatus body comprising a first aperture and a second aperture, wherein each ridge formed on the first aperture surface is so formed as to facilitate the movement of a suture in the first longitudinal direction and the first latitudinal direction along the first aperture and oppose the movement of